AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure, in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider and a service requestor for services having a respective number of service specifications, the method comprising:

creating said contract data comprising contract selection parameters for <u>subsequently</u> selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts;

including said contract data into a request for said service;

issuing, via the network, said request for said service; and

receiving, via the network, the service according to [[said]] <u>a</u> selection <u>of the at least one service contract based upon the contract selection parameters</u>.

Claims 15-20 (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A service requester computer server hardware system for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider and a service requestor for services having a respective number of service specifications, the system comprising:

at least one processor, wherein the at least one processor configured for

creating said contract data comprising contract selection parameters for subsequently selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts;

including said contract data into a request for said service;

issuing said request for said service via network; and

receiving the service according to [[said]] a selection of the at least one service contract based upon the contract selection parameters.

Claims 22-27 (Cancelled)

28. (Currently Amended) A computer usable tangible medium having computer readable instructions embodied therein for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider and a service requestor for services having a respective number of service specifications, the computer readable instructions, when executed on a computer system, causing the computer system to perform the operations comprising:

creating said contract data comprising contract selection parameters for subsequently selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts;

including said contract data into a request for said service;

issuing, via the network, said request for said service; and

receiving, via the network, the service according to [[said]] a selection of the at least one service contract based upon the contract selection parameters.

Claims 29-34 (Cancelled)

35. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for processing contract data associated with services to be provided via a network in an infrastructure, in which a plurality of binding contracts exists between a service provider and a service requestor for services having a respective number of service specifications, the method comprising:

receiving, via the network, said contract data included in a request with which the service is requested, wherein said contract data comprises contract selection parameters for selecting at least one service contract out of said plurality of contracts;

evaluating said contract selection parameters;

selecting one particular contract according to said evaluation and further selection logic; and

providing, via the network, the service according to said contract.

36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein said contract data is processed via software interfaces adapted to comprise said contract data, said interfaces comprising respective definitions of the transport protocol in use, of the messaging protocol in use and on an associated port type in use.

37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein said contract data is processed within header fields of a web service request.

38. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein

said contract data is processed as a part of the endpoint specification of a respective service request.

39. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein

said contract selection parameters are transported in a SOAP message conforming to the SOAP standard.

40. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein

multiple contract selection parameters are combined in a single service request.

41. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein

said contract selection parameters comprise meta-data identifying a particular contract.

42. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein

said contract data is processed via software interfaces adapted to comprise said contract data, said interfaces comprising respective definitions of the transport protocol in use, of the messaging protocol in use and on an associated port type in use.

43. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein

said contract data is processed within header fields of a web service request.

44. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein

said contract data is processed as a part of the endpoint specification of a respective service request.

45. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein

said contract selection parameters are transported in a SOAP message conforming to the SOAP standard.

46. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein

multiple contract selection parameters are combined in a single service request.

47. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein

said contract selection parameters comprise meta-data identifying a particular contract.

48. (Previously Presented) The computer usable tangible medium according to claim 28, wherein

said contract data is processed via software interfaces adapted to comprise said contract data, said interfaces comprising respective definitions of the transport protocol in use, of the messaging protocol in use and on an associated port type in use.

49. (Previously Presented) The computer usable tangible medium according to claim 28, wherein

said contract data is processed within header fields of a web service request.

50. (Previously Presented) The computer usable tangible medium according to claim 28, wherein

said contract data is processed as a part of the endpoint specification of a respective service request.

51. (Previously Presented) The computer usable tangible medium according to claim 28, wherein

said contract selection parameters are transported in a SOAP message conforming to the SOAP standard.

52. (Previously Presented) The computer usable tangible medium according to claim 28, wherein

multiple contract selection parameters are combined in a single service request.

53. (Previously Presented) The computer usable tangible medium according to claim 28, wherein

said contract selection parameters comprise meta-data identifying a particular contract.